10: d'Orleans--261 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 302

"I remark some differences between the inhabitants [LSS of Sop Nao] and the Thaï's whom we have just left. Here the men shave the head, leaving only a small circle of short hair on the top. The women wear only one garment, which is fastened round the waist. At first sight the type seems to me distinct from that of Thaï; I think it is rather more European, there is a look of Indo-Caucasian relationship. The face is paler and longer, the cheekbones less prominent, the eyes less oblique than those of their Eastern brothers. However, I am only stating a first impression, which requires confirmation."

10: d'Orleans--261-262 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 304,

"The boatmen [LSS: Kha from Laos] wear a sampot, a kind of petticoat folded between the legs so that it forms puffed breeches; one of them has his legs tattooed up to the knees; the designs, half circles surrounding dragons, [262] are so close together that at a distance they look like drawers."

10: d'Orleans--278-279 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 304, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Here [LSS: in a village between Muong Ngoi and Luang Prabang in Laos] also we meet some Kas; the men have a piece of wood or a bouquet of flowers in the lobe [279] of the ear, which forms a large fleshy ring, and their legs are tattooed. The women wear a small embroidered jacket; a deep blue turban with embroidered fringes surrounds a chignon ornamented by two round silver plates, joined by a small chain; chaplets of transparent glass beads are wound round them. The natives allow us to photograph them."

10: d'Orleans--302 -305 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"For the most part of small stature, (1) the Kas are very dark in complexion and of

1. Those whom we measured averaged about five feet two inches; the women being smaller.

the same colour all over the body. Their legs are as a rule thin and their stomachs protuberant; the nose broad and flat; the eyes rather elongated; the lips thick and the jaw prominent, while the forehead is narrow and receding. The facial angle seems to indicate that they belong to an inferior race, and, as a matter of fact, they look like savages by the side of the Laotians. These Kas have long, straight hair falling over the forehead, in some cases tied together by a strip of cloth, or else plastered on the top of the head and fastened at the back in a chignon. The men wear a large ring in the lobe of the ear and fill up the interstice with a piece of wood, [pages 303 and 304 contain illustration] [305] or a bunch of flowers. Their dress, as a rule, consists only of a sheet, that is to say of a piece of blue cloth passing between the legs and fastened round the waist, the women wearing a turban, a loose vest, and a short petticoat."

10: d'Orleans--303 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

KHAMOUKS, (FULL AND SIDE FACE), LUANG PRABANG.

CONTINUED
FROM
PRECEDING
FICHE

10: d'Orleans--306 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 142, 291, 301

"Compared to the Kas, the Laotians, as I have said, represent the dominant race. Taller than the former, and of a lighter complexion, the men have not in the shoulders and chest the purity of lines which one sees in the savages, and they generally go about bareheaded, with their hair cut close and clothed only in a tunic. The women wear merely a small petticoat, though some of them have a scarf of red or yellow silk over their breasts. Their bust is, as a rule, of good shape, and their hair, combed back, is worn in a small chignon. Despite their slightly flattened nose and the size of their mouth, some of the young girls strike one as pretty, but, as is always the case in the south and in the east, they soon show signs of age. They are very fond of jewellery, and generally wear earrings in the shape of a long nail of red gold, and bracelets of the same material."

10: d'Orleans--309 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 301

A LAOS FLOWER GIRL, LUANG PRABANG.

10: d'Orleans--316 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 302, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"Their clothing [LSS: the Lu of Luang Prabang] is very poor compared with that of the latter, [LSS: the Laotians] the men wearing short blue trousers and the women, striped petticoats, the latter having their hair drawn up in a chignon at the top of the head, covered in many cases with a dark blue scarf, while both sexes wear a loose blue vest."

10: d'Orleans--317
116, 291

T-3 (1891-92) 1894

Laos
Ethnic subgroups

MÉO OF TRANINH (FULL AND SIDE FACE) AT LUANG PRABANG.

10: d'Orleans--320 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 291, 437, 443, 551

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "... We were overrun by a troop of female hawkers, who settled themselves down in our quarters and spread out their wares for sale. These women all wear the same sort of dress, namely a silk petticoat with a scarf to match, some of them having their hair cropped close after the Siamese fashion, which is a very ugly one. After a few days we get quite familiar and call these young ladies by their proper names. They either have some name which indicates their sex, followed by the qualification of small, pretty, or what not; or else they bear the name of some good quality, such as peace, happiness, prosperity, jewel. The same saleswomen came back every day, asking an exorbitant price for every article and not showing any inclination to rebate it. However, they are very good-natured in the bargaining which follows, and seem as well pleased if they do not effect a sale as when, after a long discussion, we end by making a purchase."

23: Franck--270-271 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 101, 291, 301, 481 Ethnic subgroup

"I had known the Miao, or, as the French call them, the Méo, in southwestern China, though there my acquaintance had been mainly with the 'Flowery Miao' in their extravagantly colorful dress. These were 'Blac[illegible]Miao', a much more independent tribe, and with almost no color in their black or dark-blue garments, sometimes set off by a dull red or purplish wine-colored scarf about the waist. Both men and women, often riding on horses, were a wilder tawnier type than their flowery relatives, their sturdy independence as plainly to be seen as their bare feet; for none of them, of either sex, had ever tortured their feet with shoes. Their sunburned hair and eyes were more nearly brown than black, and both sexes wore the hair long. Most of the men had carelessly wound turbans of dark cloth, a few of them wore Chinese skullcaps and dressed their hair Chinese fashion, old Chinese fashion, more exactly, for the majority still had queues, often hanging unbraided loosely about their shoulders. Another custom among these sturdy mountaineers is the wearing about their necks of heavy silver rings of all shapes. These are evidently concerned with their tribal superstitions as well as being their idea of combining adornment with safe banking. All silver money that falls into their hands is turned into rings; men, women, even the children, all wear them, large and small, from mere twisted silver wire to veritable horse-collars, some with open ends, some fastened with silver padlocks. Sometimes there are as many as half a dozen on a single neck, even of men on their way to work in the jungle. The richest

of them clanked like perambulating pawnshops whenever they moved.

A critical observer might have wondered why they do not spend for shirting some of the silver dollars they turn into neck-rings. For the men wear a shirt or jacket that covers [271] everything except what a shirt is most expected to cover, leaving bare a foot or more of the waist, with the navel as its central point of departure. But to every race its own ideas. The girls are not prudish, yet not at all forward. For their jackets, open almost to the navel and giving frequent half-glimpses of the breasts, were plainly designed for comfort rather than coquetry, as were their plaid skirts reaching hardly to their bare knees. The women walk with a powerful yet not ungraceful swing of the hips and a saucy flirting of their short pleated skirts, of which they are perhaps quite unconscious. Some of the men wear the tatooed blue panties ending in ruffles just below the knees that are common in Laos and the Shan States, but this is evidently due to extratribal influence, just as are the flowered silk gowns a few of the well-to-do among them wear after the fashion of the Chinese."

23: Franck--279 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 291, 302

"It was market day, and well fed, almost haughty women, with many brilliant reds and yellows in their dress, were squatted in the shade over their semi-tropical vegetables, and pottering homeward again in long broken files. They had almost nothing in common with the Annamese women, except their sex and the protection of the French. Their lustrous hair piled in great black glossy heaps on the top of the head in an intricate fashion, usually with a saffron, rose-yellow, or red cloth about it, and most of them with stomachers of similar gay colors, they were striking examples of the unrestricted portion of the human race. In complexion they were much like ourselves plus many layers of tan, but were noticeable for bad teeth."

23: Franck--287-288 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 501

"We were off down the small river about seven next morning. To have started earlier, with a heavy fog filling the whole valley of a stream bristling with rocks and rapids, would have been dangerous. The king's son-in-law and I each had a boat, though I should have liked better to have had him with me, for the sake of information as well as companionship. The craft were what the French call pirogues, long and narrow, as slim and long in proportion as a lead-pencil, sharpened at both ends, and just about as easily turned over. They were frailly made of boards barely an inch thick, tied together with vines, with a prairie-schooner top of banana-leaves held in shape by a network of bamboo splints, and movable back and forth as sun, wind, rain, or lack thereof suggested; and mine had a raised platform with a mat in honor of my super-princely rank. It was of about the size, and the comfort, of its [288] antithesis, of the mule-litter of northern China, which it strangely resembled in its jerky overbalanced gait, teetering so incessantly that I could not even write rough notes in it. I had four boatmen, two at each of the slightly raised, distant, pencil-like ends of the craft, all wearing tattooed breeches but not much else. Sitting cross-legged and half pretending to paddle, these typical piroguiers of Luang Prabang seemed the personification of laziness, until one saw them in the rapids, the rock gorges, the genuine waterfalls they dare to shoot."

23: Franck--288-289 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 361, 576

"Every few [289] hours a cluster of jungle houses stood out in a tiny half-clearing on the high bank of the river, and most of these we visited. At each village the chief and the other men of importance, usually including several yellow-robed priests, came to pay their respects. Instead of snatching off hats or head-cloths, and performing an antic between a courtesy and an exaggerated bow, the form of salute in Luang Prabang is to come to a complete squat. Obsequious as this looked, it was evidently merely a gesture of politeness, for even the men of highest rank who had any intercourse with the prince, representative of the king in person, dropped to their haunches, and rose to human stature again only when the interview ended. In making any request of him, or in receiving anything from him, even the boatmen squatted, holding both hands, palms together, above the head. The village notables wore sampots of many colors--purple, pink, grass-green--topped by khaki coats of uniform cut, which they evidently donned in our honor. Always they brought us leaf-wrapped cones of flowers, usually on banana-leaf platters. A supply of these bouquets of greeting, one concluded, must be kept on hand for emergencies."

"The women were usually the first to see us, for they were constantly bathing themselves and their naked urchins in the stream, and they were clever at getting into or out of their barrel-like single garment without unduly exposing themselves. I saw more bathing on that journey down the Nam-khan than during my two years in China, and less uncleanliness in all Laos than in the smallest Chinese village. The women of Luang Prabang, especially along the rivers, are no burden to their fathers and husbands so far as clothing is concerned. In every village we visited they were naked to the waist, and did not know it; at least [290] they did not seem to be conscious that in other, often less modest lands, such a costume might be frowned upon. They wore a single piece of cloth, spun from cotton grown on the spot, and woven on hand-looms under their long-legged houses. Colored in the thread with dyes made from nuts and vegetable growths of the region, this strip is simply wrapped about the waist. Or, in the case of a few of the youngest, which in that backward land still means the more modest women, the unmarried perhaps, or at least those who had not yet borne a child, it is wrapped about the lower two thirds of the breasts, with correspondingly more of the legs showing. Thus one recognized the girls of flapper age by their shapely brown legs and the matrons by their resemblance in costume to the Venus of Milo. Once a child has arrived, the exposure incident to suckling it seems to overcome virginal modesty, or in the absence of offspring pride no doubt soon joins carelessness in casting

out the habits of maidenhood, so that there were displayed the scrawny pendent udders of the sterile as well as the withered rags of old age. The sight of a white man appeared to move some of the women to cover their breasts, a mere matter of deftly raising the garment. Whether this gesture was a recognition of the susceptibility of the French--who surely could not have issued non-exposure decrees!--or a mere matter of politeness, like the male squat, there was no means of knowing."

23; Franck--292-293 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 301, 304 Ethnic subgroup

"It was in one of these villages of the upper Nam-khan that I saw the first of still another race, the Kha, which some consider the real aborigines of these forested mountains of the ancient kingdom, as they are indubitably the oldest remaining inhabitants. They were wild but harmless-looking men, wearing earrings, their women adorned with still larger ones. A Kha woman down from the mountains--for like the Miao they are a highland people--had tattooed arms and, at least while the prince and I were [293] there, was completely clothed from neck to calves, in decided contrast to the river-village women."

23: Franck--298-299 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 832

"The gay garments, especially of the female branch of the population, make doubly picturesque the market and the long lanes of greenery that represent streets. The women of Luang Prabang capital, unlike their country sisters in the rest of the kingdom, usually wear a thin silk or cotton scarf of bright color over their bare breasts, half covering them, and slipping coquettishly off when they wish to make an impression on one of the opposite sex. The Laosian women of the bush think no more of their uncovered breasts than they do of their bare feet; these sophisticated girls of the silken scarf in the capital recognize them as an asset. There was something about their every gesture that recalled our own flappers--with betel-nut taking the place of gum and of lip-stick. Yet their coquetry may be largely innocent, for the French assured me, in some cases rather regretfully, I [299] thought, that in Laos there are few of the congaie facilities so common in Annam."

23: Franck--306-308 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-3
116, 291, 643

"He [EJ: the king] wore a white cork helmet, a black bow-tie about a standing white collar on a stiff white shirt with the round cuffs of a decade or more ago, and a snow-white three button coat which, in so far as my meager knowledge in sartorial matters is trustworthy, was of the latest model. The fact that the middle buttonhole was attached to the upper button may have meant either a dreadful ignorance of Western ways or merely unseemly haste in leaving his harem; or it may have had no significance whatever. His feet were quite properly incased in low black shoes of faultless last and luster, but--let the spinster reader blushingly turn the page [307] here--he wore no trousers! His rank and calling, it seems, forbade him these final touches to an otherwise perfectly European costume. Instead, his thighs were inclosed in the pha or sampot, such as is worn by both sexes in Siam and adjoining countries under Siamese influence. It was a kind of short skirt, evidently of silk and of colors verging on the gaudy, drawn between the legs and tucked into the belt at the back, reaching to just below the knees in front and 'rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind.' Naturally a full-fledged king could not leave the hiatus uncovered and keep his self-respect. Therefore between sampot and shoes the royal legs were clad in silk stockings of which the most regal young lady of our own land might have been proud--except that in her case they would no doubt have been of a color to deceive the uninformed observer into thinking she wore no stockings whatever, whereas in backward barbarian Luang Prabang this would have

been bad form. These were jet-black and reached so far up the back as to suggest that they were held by a band about the waist. Indeed, it was immediately evident that the king had missed a splendid chance for extra decoration by not wearing a pair of red garters just below the knees.

A goodly proportion of the royal income must be spent on stockings. For I was assured, not merely by common rumor but by all the Frenchwomen in Luang Prabang--of whom there are three or four--that his Majesty will under no circumstances wear anything but silk about his shapely legs, and that a stocking with the slightest hole in it is immediately discarded. It would be easy to imagine his wives, of whom he fortunately has fifteen, scrambling for these discards of the royal wardrobe, and racing for their darning needles, were it not that in Laos even the wives of kings do not wear stockings. [308]

But do not for a moment gather from all this that Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah had the slightest hint of the barbarian in his appearance. Except for the sacred sampot in place of trousers, and the proof of a king's income between that and the shoes, his Majesty would have attracted no attention whatever in a Palm Beach crowd, unless it were by his athletic build and his agreeable undissipated smile, and, at close range, the light touch as of fresh blood on his lips beneath the thin well clipped moustache. In fact of all the kings with whom I have hobnobbed he was the most pleasing to look

upon, and to all outward appearances a gentleman not even given to bullying his wives. His lapel was adorned with the little red button of a French decoration--the Legion of Honor, I fancy, though I confess to a deplorable ignorance of these important matters--and a gold watch-chain hanging from this drew attention to what was evidently not the thinnest of watches in the outside breast-pocket. A signet-ring not unlike those of our West Point and Annapolis graduates encircled his wedding finger, and he wore a cord of what looked like ordinary string about each wrist."

23: Franck--326-327 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 206, 291, 411

"It looked strange to see men [327] wearing only a loin-cloth, and a dagger in a scabbard woven like a basket and held by a fiber band across the chest, putting up telegraph-poles; but the French insist on being able to talk to one another anywhere in Indo-China, and government ownership of telegraph lines has at least one advantage over the high-cost private system of the United States and China."

231 Franck--330[2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 301, 567 Ethnic subgroup

"Daylight showed the dense vegetation deeply green, a land as far from China as if we were on another continent, and disclosed our dozen carriers to be Kha wild from the mountains, picturesque figures even in a land as out of the ordinary as Laos.

Instead of tattooed pants of cloth sampots these primitive fellows wore short cloth breeches like running-pants, and some of them had more or less of an upper garment also. They showed no tattooing, or at least very little, but rattled with bracelets of glass and other cheap materials, and had large earrings of all shapes, preferably not mates and if possible utterly unlike on the two sides of the same head. The few who did not have earrings put flowers or vine strings or leaves in the holes in their ears to keep them ready for more prosperous times. They had the eyes and the ways of the real wild man; yet, being former slaves, they were more docile than the Laosians or Pwun."

23: Franck--332-333 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 304, 342, 855 Ethnic subgroup

"In most of the [EJ: Kha] huts grandmother and even skinnier grandfather were tending the third generation while the intermediate one was out in the hills in quest of a livelihood. Some of the villages had their basket-like thatched-top huts raised above the ground, like those of the other people of Laos; the commoner custom was to squat on the ground itself in a thatch structure like a flat wigwam. The women, and for that matter the men, were all naked to the waist, a disgusting custom [333] in the case of the old women, whose breasts were as shrunken as if they were about to dry up and drop off. They gave one an unhappy reminder of how brief is the span of human existence. Old men and women alike had holes in their ears large enough to hold a cigar."

23: Franck--337-338 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 177, 291, 304, 644 Ethnic subgroup

"The prince had only to order the village chief, or the inhabitants themselves, to furnish new carriers, however, and they were soon there, though from then on we changed as often as we came to a village, sometimes two or three times a day. The coolies still seemed to be Kha, but they were men who had come into more contact with the outside world than those who had been with me all that strenuous Sunday, and they had lost some of the ornaments, simplicity, and politeness. Perhaps they were [338] not Kha at all, for they had all sorts of tattooing, and some of them had raised welts, like the bush negroes of Dutch Guiana. Each man according to his fancy wore a kind of kilt that was really a mere strip of cloth wound about him from waist to knees. Now and then we passed a woman on a journey, in a costume in which she would not have been unnoticed on Broadway, wearing earrings, neck-rings, two bracelets on each arm, and a barrel-shaped strip of cloth from nipples to knees, and carrying her bed and belongings, consisting of a sack hanging down from her forehead and on her back a rolled-up grass or reed mat on which to spend her virtuous nights."

23: Franck--341 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 164, 291

"Women were bathing children and themselves here also, especially now toward sunset, but no one came to stare at me, though in China there would have been a regular circus audience. Nor was this for lack of energy, for on the whole these were a well built, muscular, and very healthy-looking people, with few if any signs of a social disease so common in Annam and China and with almost none of the filth diseases. Though the women all showed their breasts and thought nothing of it, one never saw even a bathing man completely naked. So-called barbarian peoples, though they commonly wear only a loin-cloth or its feminine equivalent, are usually as exacting about having that in place as we are with our own clothing."

25: Brodrick--91 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 142, 162, 291, 361

"The Laotians who, in their land, keep to the river valleys and avoid the hills and plateaux, are fairly easy to recognize, since there is no confusing them with the strangely garbed men and women of the northern hills or with the semi-savage 'Khas' of the mountains. The Laotians are, as a rule, of more sturdy build than any Annamese, and compared with the stolid and serious-looking Cambodians, the men of the Laos are gay and smiling, Their dress is quite unlike that of the Cambodians. Only the saffron-clad monks will be familiar if you come up from the south. The girls, especially, love bright colours. The usual costume is a skirt reaching to the ankles and often, if not generally, of light tint, puce, mauve, yellow or red. At the waist and the hem is a band of polychrome embroidery, green and white, purple and yellow or green, red and yellow. The women wear usually a white shift, sleeveless and cut rather low back and front, but all are girt about with a long, generally, yellow scarf, draped either as a bandolier with a long end hanging down one side or slung as a gigantic necklace like an Hawaian garland."

68: Mouhot--134 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 291, 302, 164, 826

"The Laotians [HD: in the territory between Loeui and Pak Lai] much resemble the Siamese: a different pronunciation and slow manner of speech being all that distinguishes their language. The women wear petticoats, and keep their hair long, which, when combed, gives the younger ones a more interesting appearance than those have who live on the banks of the Menam; but, at an advanced age, with their unkempt locks thrown negligently over one temple, and their immense goîtres, which they admire, they are repulsively ugly."

149: Reinach--92a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

291

516

Fig. 34 /p. 123/ A celebration at Khong. --Group of Laotians.

149: Reinach--101a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

142
516
291
411
482

Fig. 36 /p. 135/ Typical Khas of the province of Stung-Treng.

149: Reinach--102a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

411

297

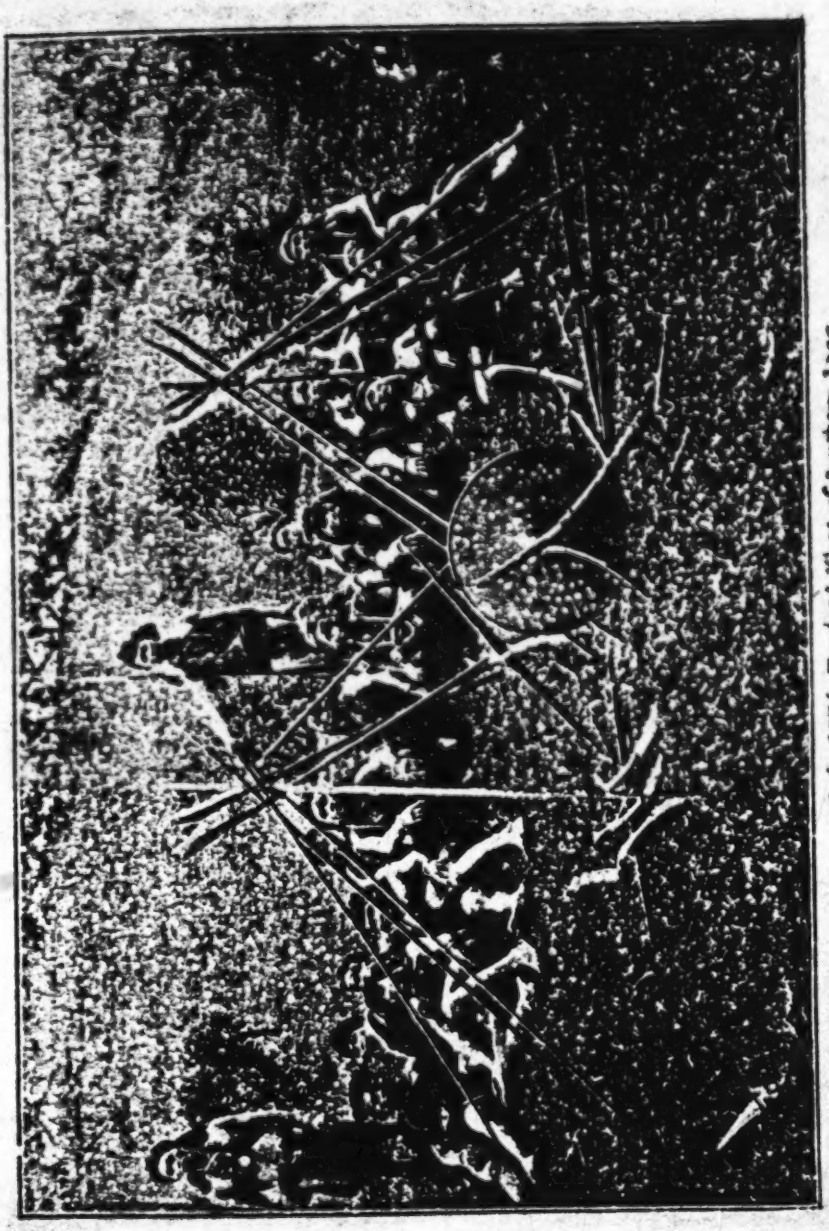

Fig. 37 /p.137/ Typical Khas of southern Laos.

149: Reinach--133a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

291

5/3

149: Reinach--134 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"Costume. The Laotian costume is the langouti or Siamese sampot. This is a long band of cloth without any seams, and between one and 1.2 meters wide by 2.5 to three meters long. The cloth is placed around the waist to make a skirt, with the opening in front. To keep the skirt in place a knot is made in front with part of the surplus cloth, and the loose ends of the cloth left hanging in front are rolled, passed between the legs and attached to the belt in the middle of the back. The skirt then takes the form of a pair of baggy trousers covering the front of the legs down to the knees and leaving the lower part of the thighs bare in back. The chest is left bare, and a sash is tied around the waist. This is the ordinary garment, and that worn by all the common people. The sash is often worn on the shoulder or around the chest, but it has to be removed and wound around the loins whenever one speaks to anyone who has a right to one's respect. Dandies wear shoes, stockings or socks, quite frequently a short-sleeved or sleeveless knitted vest, a jacket made of white cotton or flannel, depending on the season, and a hat of any type whatever, or even a cap. But these are imported European styles which have not become widespread. Umbrellas enjoy great favor." (Le Laos Français.)

This costume is a relatively recent import, for two hundred years or so ago the Laotians on the banks of the river, as those of the interior still do today, wore a fairly long jacket [178] made of cotton cloth woven in the land. The jacket was caught in at the waist by a sash and came down over a broad pair of trousers made of the same material. The whole garment was dark blue or almost black in color. On the head they wore a kind of turban made of silk or cotton of the same color.

The abandonment of this purely Thai costume was due to the influence of the Siamese and Cambodians during their incursions into Laos. It was also at this time that the Laotians formed the habit of cutting their hair, which they had previously worn rolled in a coil on the back of the head.

"Laotian women wear a skirt which covers them from the hips to the ankles and is made of silk interwoven with gold threads. These skirts are rather dark in color, and the pattern is made up of vertical stripes which are close together and difficult to see. In Luang-Prabang the lower part of the garment is decorated with a flat trimming formed of two or three closely spaced gold galloons. At the top of the skirt a sash made of red cloth and embroidered to a greater

291 or less degree lightens its rather dark color. The skirt is a true cylinder, with the same diameter all along its length. A woman raises the skirt in a mass like a crown above her head, lets it slide down along her body and fastens it to her waist, without any hooks or fasteners, by tucking it in along her stomach, which is largely left bare. A brightly colored sash of cotton or silk is thrown over one shoulder, sometimes covering the breasts, to complete the costume.

"During the cold season, where there is a winter, a few women cover their trunks with a short jacket. This garment finds favor mainly outside the larger centers.

302 "A certain number of women wear their hair cut in Bressant style, in accordance with the style imported by the Siamese. The greater number wear their long hair rolled into a coil on the top or side of the head. Women's coiffures vary, moreover, depending on the region and on whether they are married or single.

292 "For great ceremonies, wealthy women wear skirts made of cloth spangled with gold or silver, and sashes of the same type.

"In Luang-Prabang they add a silk or velvet jacket decorated with embroidery on the neck, front and cuffs. Merchants can be found in this city who rent out costumes of this type, as well as gold jewelry, for great ceremonies to women who do not have any." (Le Laos français.)

301 Jewelry. Jewels find great favor among the [179] Laotians and
556 are used to complete and enrich their costume. They are not only ornaments, but also the most widespread method for realizing and preserving the liquid part of their fortune. In fact, the inhabitants transform the greater part of [Illustration here] their savings and profits into jewelry, and since they wear them on their body they are spared the use of strongboxes.

[583] The women and children are the ones who wear jewels most. They go into the trousseau of the young bride, and parents give them to their children as the latter grow up, thus putting together a sort of dowry for the time when they reach the age of marriage.

301 [180] Gold and silver are used in making jewelry, and precious
306 stones such as rubies, sapphires and various genuine or imitation gems are sometimes added as ornaments.

Gold is not used in all parts of Laos, but is mainly limited to the large centers located near regularly worked gold-bearing deposits.

[563] Doubtless because of the application of ancient sumptuary laws, silver is the only metal used by certain races--even by the Khas,

149: Reinach--136a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

291
516

Fig. 46 /p.181/ A Laotian Tasseng of Upper Laos.
(Courtesy of M. Besson.)

149: Reinach--138a G-3 (no date)1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

291
142

Fig. 47 /p.183/ Group of Laotians of Lower Laos.

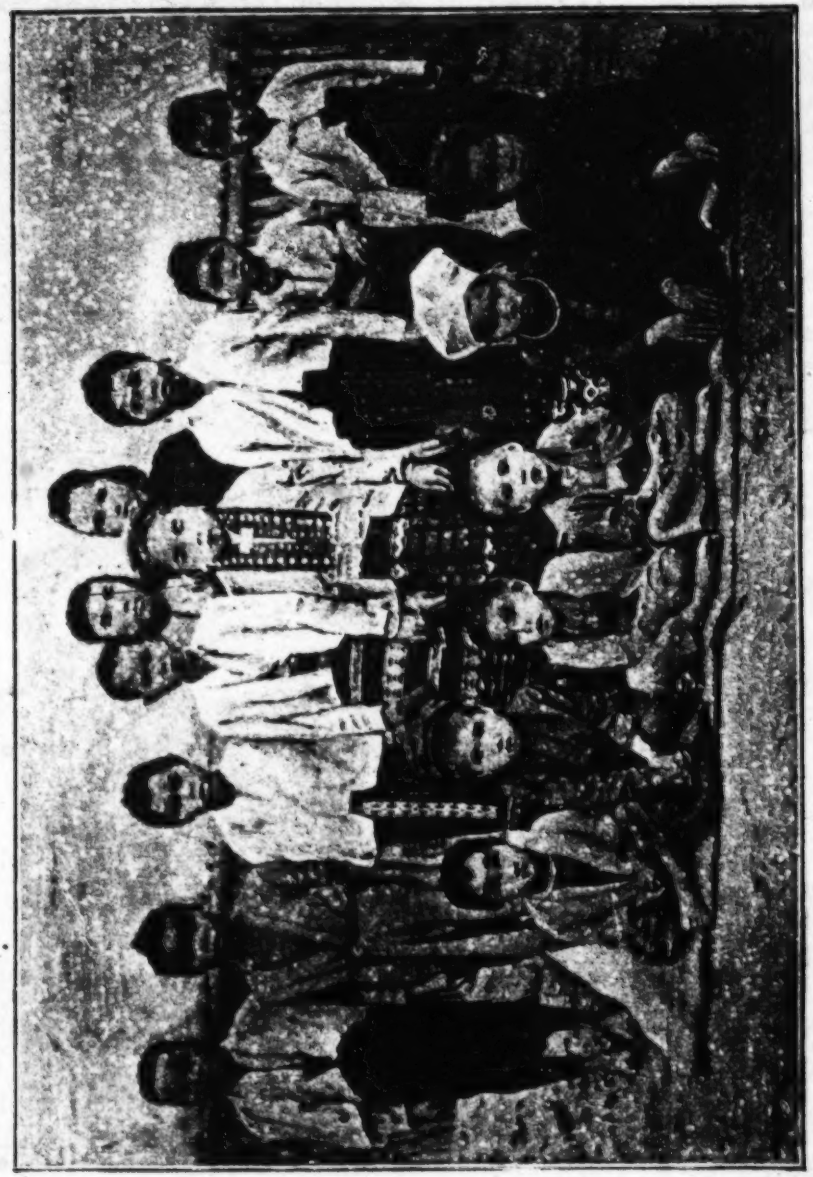

Fig. 50 /p.197/ Typical children of Muong-Son (Hua-Pahn). (Courtesy of M. Besson.)

149: Reinach--17/a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

291
142

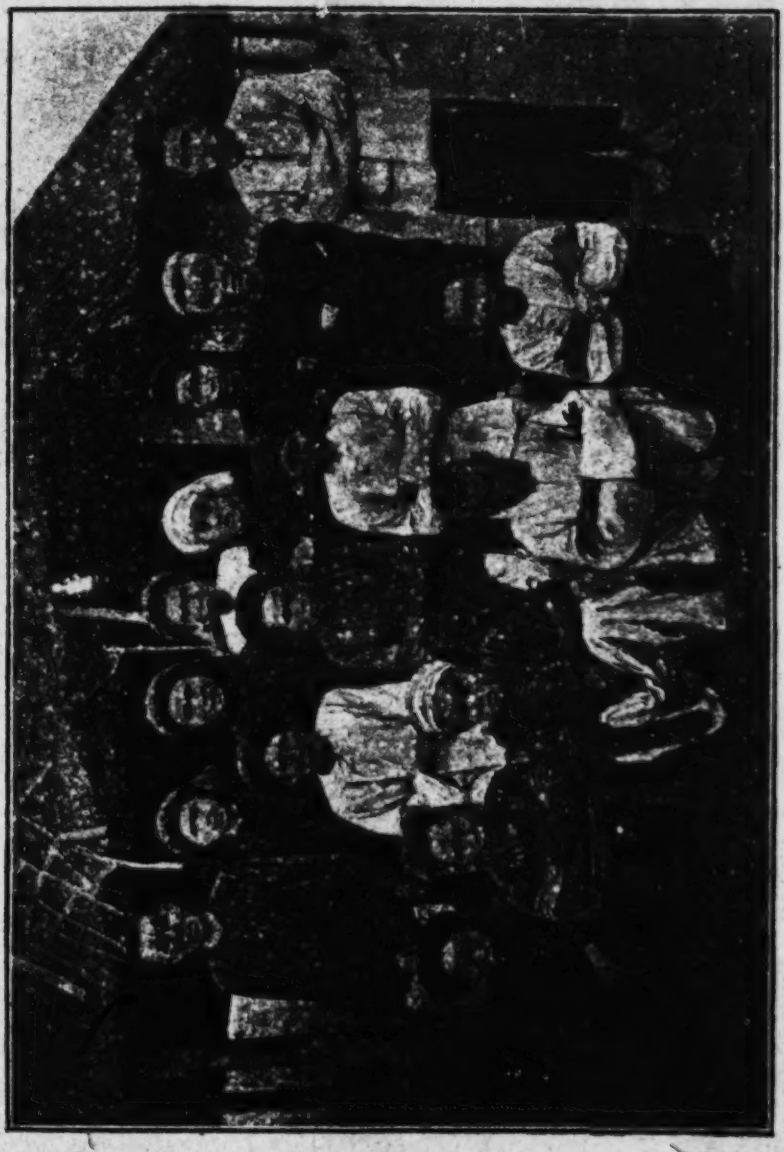

Fig. 57 /p.229/ Group of Phou-Thais (Lib-Sorg-Chau-Thais).

619
[291] they bear come, as in the case of the Khao-Thais, from peculiarities of costume. In fact, whereas the Dam-Thais, both men and women, only wear clothing which is dark blue and almost black, with no 563 colored ornamentation, the Deng-Thais, although they wear the same kind of clothing, always add a few ornaments such as embroidery, galloons or red turbans.

142 Physical appearance. Costume. The Thais have strongly marked features and stern faces. Their complexion is clear and rather swarthy, 461 and they are quite tall. They are more hardy and above all more industrious than the Laotians.

Like the Annamites, the men let their hair grow. They bind it 302 up in a coil on the top of the head and cover it with a vast turban, 291 the ends of which fall onto their shoulders on either side of the face. Men's clothing consists of a broad pair of trousers with a very low seat and a straight tunic buttoned along the side which comes down to the knees. A sort of sash made of the same kind of cloth hugs the [286] waist over the tunic, as a belt would do. The material used by the Thais for clothing are made of cotton which is generally grown locally and which the [232] women spin, weave and dye themselves. Their garments, made with very coarse, irregular thread, have a rough appearance but are very solid.

142 The women's figures are thick-set but not fleshy. Their faces, which are more rounded than elongated, are pleasant and their eyes are beautiful. But childbearing and the work of the fields soon destroy their gracefulness, and after the age of twenty-five their figures thicken, their wrists and ankles become heavy and their faces begin to harden and wrinkle. [Illustration alongside text here]

[286] The Thai woman wears a skirt which is quite similar to the Laotian skirt, but made of coarser cloth and dyed the same color as the men's 291 clothing. Over this she wears a very short jacket made of the same cloth which is buttoned down the front and sometimes embellished 563 with chased silver work. The height of elegance is for the jacket to be cut in such a way that when the woman moves in a certain way it lets a little skin be seen above the skirt waist. Outside the home and for ceremonies the women put on a sort of dressing gown which covers their other clothing and comes down to the ankle. Its sleeves are very close-fitting, and the garment buttons straight down the front to a point below the waist. A strip of dark violet cloth, for the Dam-Thais, and red for

Tribal Tai

291 the Deng-Thais, is applied to the edges of the gown. It is further
563 ornamented [233] on the outside edge opposite the buttonholes with colored silk embroidery which does not go down below the waist.

This garment is also folded in half lengthwise and worn rolled around the body with the sleeves left hanging.

302 The women wear their hair parted down the middle in front
301 and rolled into a sort of long tassel behind which is contained within the folds of a little turban. The latter is wound above the forehead and the free end inserted under the first turn, on the nape of the neck. This headdress is quite similar to that of the Annamite women in Tonkin.

In certain regions of Laos, Thai women wind their hair into a sort of coil which girls wear loosely down their neck and betrothed or married women wear on top of the head. Thai jewelry is made of heavy silver and is of the same type as Laotian jewelry. The men wear bracelets on their wrists.

262 Food. The Thai diet is like that of the Laotians, but they prefer
264 non-glutinous white rice and use chopsticks like the Chinese and Annamites.

The use of betel is quite widespread among the Thais, but in
276 contrast to the Laotians they keep their teeth white. The Thais smoke the oily, opiated tobacco of Tonkin and China in bamboo waterpipes whose tiny bowls only contain a small pinch of tobacco. They also smoke a local variety of tobacco, either in cigarettes or in pipes with a highly worked clay bowl into which a long stem ending in a glass or jade mouthpiece is inserted.

156 Character. Although serious and reflective, the Thais have a vivacious and friendly character. They are somewhat cold in appearance, but are sound friends and highly affable when one gets to know them better.

[70] Gentler and more timid than the Laotians, they have no taste for the art of war and it is difficult to get them to stay in the native militia.

433 They are very self-seeking and much more miserly than the Lao-
438 tians. [234] It should be noted, moreover, that since they produce everything themselves and are a people of farmers and livestock
156 breeders, they do not have, by virtue of their ever sedentary occupations, the opportunities which these latter have to enjoy fairly high profits resulting from commercial transactions, nor the special habits which contact with different races gives.

181 The Thais love pleasure and celebrations. Guaranteed their daily
461

149: Reinach--176a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

291

516

Tribal Tai

619 The Neua-Thais. The Neua-Thais differ very little, in all
361 respects, from their fellows. They generally live on higher ground than the other Thais, but they change the location of their village quite frequently. [241] [Illustration] [242] [Blank page] [243]

291 The women knot their skirts under their armpits, above their breasts, and always wear a very short jacket made of cotton, silk or velvet, depending on the season.

231 They engage in sericulture, and with the silk spin and weave brocaded cloth with harmonious colors.

779 At the same time as ancestor worship, the Neu-Thais practice an attenuated form of Buddhism. Pagodas are rare and the bonzes, few in number, serve several centers in turn.

461 Their character is docile. They do not have a very marked taste
276 for trade and are content to be excellent farmers and livestock breeders. Unfortunately, they are inclined to be opium smokers. This is doubtless due to the proximity of the Meos and Yaos who are the producers of the drug.

619 The Phou-Eunes. This branch of the Thai family is very close to
101 the Laotians in mores and customs.

There are only a few modifications in costume and language, modifications due to the age-old proximity of the Annamites and the continuous relations which have existed between the two peoples.

[438] These latter may be explained by the fact that the territory long inhabited by the Phou-Eunes in the east and southeast of Tran-Ninh is situated on the Tonkin Gulf side, and that their produce naturally flows towards the ports on the Annamite coast (1).

(1) To be sure, there are several groupings of Phou-Eunes in the Mekong basin, in Tran-Ninh, to the northeast of Vien-Tiane and in Camkeut-Cammon.

361 The Phou-Eunes prefer to live in high valleys and on high plateaus where the climate is quite severe during the winter. They are more reserved in character than the Laotians, more industrious and less inclined to celebrations and festivities of all kinds.

779 Their religion is Buddhism, but the bonzes are less numerous than elsewhere. It is probable that the little taste which Phou-Eunes have for the religious life is due to the influence of nearby Annam, where the bonzes are a long way from being venerated and coddled as they are in Laos.

149: Reinach--179 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina

Laotians AM8

Tribal Tai

Men's and women's clothing varies little in [244] form from that of the Thais. Under their jacket, however, the women wear a breast-cloth attached to the neck and waist by cords, like the Annamite and Tonkinese women. 291

The Lus. Two centuries or so ago the Lus, who also belong to the Thai race, used to live in the "Shan states" between the Salouen and the Nam-Hon, where they were surrounded by a drifting population composed of Burmese, Kunes, Ngieous, etc. [Illustration alongside text here.] 619 175

Following emigrations, they came to Laos and formed two distinct agglomerations.

Some Lu families have settled in the course of this century on the territory of Luang-Prabang. Today these Lus form villages composed exclusively of people of their race, but live on good terms with the Laotians, whose language and customs they have adopted. [563]

In the old Lu kingdom of Muong-Sing, on the other hand, this people has retained its habits, that is to say its character and temperament are like those of the Burmese. 101

There the Lu is boastful, full of arrogance, a braggart and insolent, but a little firmness is enough to humble his pride. [105]

Lus have a clear complexion, delicate features, keen eyes and a swinging stride. The men are generally tattooed from the calf of the leg to above the navel, and they also have tattoos on their chest, [245] neck, shoulders and arms which are generally red and in the shape of squares with rounded corners. They have long hair rolled in a coil on top or slightly to one side of the head. This coil is wrapped in an enormous turban which they wear tilted over one ear. Many of them have a moustache. This they train upwards, a trait which gives them a conquering air, and to keep it up they smear it with wax. [Illustration alongside text here] 142 304 302

The men's costume consists of a pair of full trousers and a short jacket buttoned along the side. It is made of cotton and is dark blue, almost black, in color. The bottoms of the trousers, the edges of the jacket, the cuffs of the sleeves and the armholes are ornamented with three galloons (blue, white and red) which are quite narrow. Their holiday clothes are often made of silk in varied colors. 291

The women wind their hair into a heavy coil on top of the head, and on the side of the coil they place a broad circular plaque of chased silver. They wear skirts like the Laotian women, but the stripes are very broad, run crosswise and are in bright colors. They [302] [301]

291 cover their bust with a small short jacket which is very close-fitting and bright in color. It has a heart-shaped opening on the chest and, like the men's jacket, is ornamented with galloons and passementerie. For celebrations and ceremonies Lu women wear a heavy turban on their head which is folded flat or pleated, shaped like a mitre and generally made of black silk spangled with gold.

301 Both men and women pierce the lobes of their ears [246] with a broad opening, into which they introduce hollow gold or silver cylinders which are sometimes as large as three centimeters in diameter.

306 Great lovers of jewelry, the Lus number skilled jewelers and goldsmiths among them who make hair coil plaques, ear cylinders, flat braided metal belts with wide chased and checkered buckles, bracelets, rings, hilts and sheaths for daggers and swords, etc. [Illustration alongside text here]

411 The Lus almost always wear daggers and swords. Each of them, so to speak, possesses a rifle, generally flintlock, which by the shape of
293 the stock, the length of the barrel and the many bands which adorn it greatly resembles the long Moukhala so dear to our Arabs in Algeria.

[361] Lu villages are clean, and the houses are arranged in a checkerboard pattern.

[231] The Lus have a high reputation as breeders of oxen and horses.

A great lover of celebrations and parades, this boisterous people
527 sets off gunpowder at every opportunity, and there is no festival, private or public, so small that it is not accompanied by salvos and fireworks.

[77] From their contact with the Burmese the men have retained a [247] [Illustration] [248] [Blank page] [249] taste for dancing and for
535 sword fights mingled with dance steps in which they manifest a real grace and elegance.

"Among other forms of amusement, the men execute, with a truly remarkable suppleness and skill, sword dances which are perfectly elegant. Naked to the waist, with their trousers rolled up and bunched and a wooden sword in each hand whose cutting edge has been dipped in dye so that the thrusts will leave a mark, the two champions confront one another. Moulinets, parries and returns follow one another without apparent effort, and the movements are undulating and rapid but without any abruptness. The men seem to be caressing one another, not fighting, and yet the slashes leave their colored traces on the skin of the vanquished. Direct thrusts are forbidden, but the entire body from head to foot is fair game for the opponent. Thus during the

149: Reinach--180b G-3 (no date) 1901 AMl Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 64 /p. 247/ Typical Lu women, at Muong-Hou.
(Courtesy of M. Besson.)

Tyibal Tai
Kha

291 The men's costume is like that of the Laotians. A few, however, have adopted the Burmese costume, turban and all, in which case they let their hair grow and roll it in a coil instead of having a brush cut.

The women wear a very long skirt with broad stripes running across it which is fastened beneath the breasts. The bust is covered by a closed jacket or bodice which is cut straight and made of cotton or silk [302] of varied colors. Their hair is rolled in a coil on the nape of the neck [301] or is held in place around the head by a narrow band of cloth and allowed to fall freely down the back. Both sexes wear metal cylinders in their ears, like the Lus, and silver jewelry.

[142] The Youns are more robust than their fellows, and also more industrious. The women are perhaps less pretty than the Laotian women, but they are just as friendly and merry.

276 [251] Both men and women chew betel, and also "Mieng" (green tea, fermented and salted). They smoke tobacco in enormous cigarettes rolled in dried banana leaves. [Illustration alongside text here]

The Youns are primarily farmers and livestock breeders. They excel in breeding and training oxen as draft animals.

212 We have seen that the Youns, although they speak the same lan-
292 guage as the Laotians, have their own form of writing which is generally used for religious writings. Their bonzes, who are highly learned for the most part, are renowned for their expert knowledge of the rites of the Buddhist religion.

101 Marriage, divorce, polygamy, births, funerals, celebrations and festivities are all the same among the Youns as among the Laotians, except for a few minor differences in detail which we need not mention here.

THE KHAS

619 Before entering into detail about the mores and customs of the
181 main Kha families, we shall again have recourse to the learned work by the Superior Resident in Laos in order to give a general sketch of this race which represents at least a third of the population.

[252] "They are to be found throughout the territory, and are divided into more than sixty families. As much as those who inhabit northern Laos are docile, manageable and respectful, so are those who inhabit the southern part of Laos proud, independent and warlike, particularly the tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate us from Annam.

149: Reinach--182a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMl Indochina
Laotians AM8

343
291

Fig. 66 /p. 251/ Typical Lus.
(Courtesy of M. Besson)

149: Reinach--183 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

Kha

"The most varied types are to be found among the Khas. Some are just like the American 'Redskins,' others have a heavier and more bestial appearance, and still others are small and puny. Certain of them are veritable savages who have never heard of clothing and live in shapeless huts, taking to the trees or fleeing into the forest at the slightest alarm, with monkey-like habits and the instincts of wild animals.

"Others, on the other hand, wear clothing quite like that of the Lus, build proper houses and enjoy a comparative degree of civilization. But they all carry a bag of dark blue cloth which never leaves them.

"It is a long way between the primitives which some of them are and the half-civilized beings which the better policed among them are. Thus the greater part of these poor folk have long been in servitude, especially in the northern and central part, and have become the humble servants of more highly refined races which exploit them.

"In the south, however, some tribes of particular origin have been able to resist all outer authority and are still free and independent today." [Lieutenant-colonel Tournier (Superior Resident in Laos), "Notice sur le Laos français," in Revue Indochinoise, Hanoi, 1900.]

The Khas of northern Laos. All the Khas of northern Laos have been brought under control, and even emancipated, and live grouped in villages or hamlets which are distributed over the mountainsides, generally near some watercourse.

Houses. Kha houses, which are built on piles and in the same style as those of the Laotians although in less careful fashion, are set down without any care for symmetry or alignment. They are generally much smaller and built for a single family. The houses are extremely dirty.

The Khas have very little in the way of large livestock, and so the under part of the houses shelter only pigs and poultry.

A few Kha tribes, such as the Khouenes (white and black), Khmous and Lemets, which are the most civilized have quite fine villages with well built and carefully aligned houses. A pagoda will sometimes be found in these.

Costume. Khas of both sexes wear their hair long and wound in a coil on the nape of the neck or top of the head. The [253] Lemets comb part of their hair down over their forehead and cut it off straight at the eyebrow level.

Kha

291 Men's clothing consists of a jacket and pair of trousers which have the same shape as those of the Lus and are made of coarse cotton cloth manufactured locally. Their headgear is a turban cut from a piece of Turkey-red cotton.

For work, clothing is generally reduced to a narrow strip of cloth forming a belt, one of the ends of which is passed between the legs and fastened in the middle of the back.

During the cold season a jacket is added to this loin-cloth.

The women wear a skirt of the Laotian type which is fastened under the armpits so that it does not come down below the calves of the legs. A short jacket completes their costume. On their head they wear a turban which is generally dark in color. [Illustration alongside text here]

301 Jewelry. Both sexes have silver or copper jewelry such as wide stiff neckbands, bracelets, rings, buttons, clasps, etc. Like the Lus and the Youns, the Khas pierce the lobes of their ears. Often the holes are of such dimensions that a roll of leaves or a bouquet of flowers can be inserted in them.

262 Food. Their diet is very like that of the Laotians and Thais. When there is a shortage of rice its place is taken, until the following harvest, by yams, taros, bamboo sprouts, banana flowers, etc.

462 Occupations. Women and children are given the hardest tasks imaginable, and it is unusual to meet them without baskets on their backs. The men carry only their bag, their sword, their rifle and their pipe.

595 Marriage. Divorce. Adultery. Polygamy is widespread among the Khas, and the number of wives a man possesses is the sign of his wealth. For, regarded as they are rather like beasts of burden and working constantly, the more numerous these wives are the more they will produce.

584 [254] The rules for marriage preliminaries closely resemble the Laotian customs and the ceremony itself, although much less splendid, comprises the same rites. To be sure, the role of the bonzes is filled here by "Pho-Tao," that is to say elders or sorcerers.

586 Divorce may be requested by the wife, or one of the wives, for personal reasons. It may also take place by mutual consent. Finally,
684 it is compulsory in the case of adultery, since the guilty woman must marry her accomplice.

Contrary to what is the case elsewhere, adultery on the part of the husband is punished by a double fine awarded to his wife's family

caught even on the other side of the watershed and then delivered as slaves to the Burmese, Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian merchants of the low country. The barbarity of their mores has been greatly lessened since our arrival in Laos, but traces of it still exist and manifest themselves in rivalries and attacks between tribes. The police force which [260] we have organized in the land in the form of a native militia, the influence of the missionaries who have settled among the turbulent Khas, and also the help and example of the tribes which have submitted to our tutelary authority will soon cause this abnormal state of things to disappear. Finally, our increasingly effective occupation of the land, which has been completed by the organization of the province of Darlac, and the strict protectorate which we exercise over Cambodia, the chief purchaser of slaves, have begun to bring order in an effective fashion to this shameful traffic in human flesh (1).

(1) See § I of Chapter XI.

It should be noted that the Djarais and the Rades are the only Khas who speak Cham, that is to say a greatly corrupted Malay tongue which they have preserved for centuries.

The men's clothing consists of a loin-cloth, and that of the women consists only of a short skirt knotted around the waist or under the armpits, the torso left bare.

Both men and women have long hair wound in a coil. Both sexes, but mainly the men, wear jewels of a crude shape, made of tin or brass, in the form of bracelets, neckbands, ear pendants or cylinders and hairpins. They are also very fond of glass bead necklaces.

These Khas smoke tobacco, either dried or green, as well as bamboo shavings impregnated with nicotine. They make terra cotta pipes with highly worked bowls and also use imported brass pipes. They do not blacken their teeth.

From the point of view of diet and housing, practically the same conditions obtain as we have seen above except that the houses are built with greater care and arranged in the form of a circular camp.

In the middle of Cedang and Rognao villages there is a large house some twenty to thirty meters long by twelve to fifteen meters wide, with a high pointed roof. This is the common house where all the boys of the locality live from the age of nine or ten until the day of their marriage.

411
482
515
291

149: Reinach--1888 G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Leotiaux AM8

Fig. 71/p.261/ Typical Khas of the province of St ng-Treng. (Photographed at Saigon in 1868.)

149: Reinach--189a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AMS

291
516

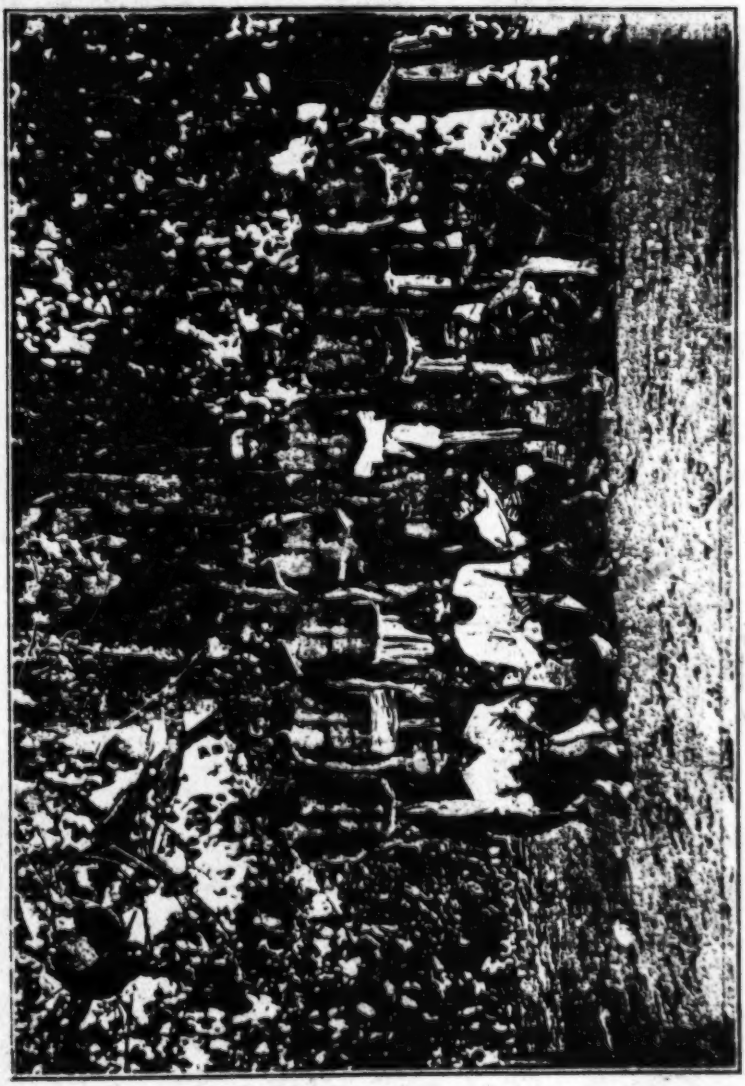

Fig. 72/p. 265/ Khas of the region of Champang (Lower Laos).

Hill Tribes

Almost all are of low birth and are crude and illiterate. They have married Thai or Kha women and thereby founded a stock of halfbreeds. This race is destined to merge with the mass of the Laotians or Thai population and through successive crossings lose all distinctive characteristics.

The Meos. The Meos are also Yunnanese who have retained a degree of independence and have not been marked with the Chinese imprint like the Hos or adopted baggy clothes and the custom of wearing their hair only in a braid.

They are distributed in groups of a few families each of which live on the peaks of the mountains in northern Laos and the Sib-Song Chau-Thais. They can be divided into three great families--the blacks, the whites and the reds--which owe their names to the color of certain parts of the women's costume. Thus among the black and red Meos skirts or jackets are light blue in color, but the latter have a wide collar ornamented with black or red embroidery. Finally, a small turban with black and white checks or of red material, depending on the case, completes their garb. Among the white Meos, the women wear a skirt and jacket of unbleached cloth, with a white and blue embroidered collar.

The men's clothing is light blue in all cases. It is composed of a broad pair of trousers which come down somewhat below the calf, where the legs are drawn tight, and of a short, tight-sleeved jacket which buttons down one side.

A turban winds around the head and covers their long hair, which may be rolled or braided.

The women's hair is parted and wound on the upper part of the nape of the neck in a coil. (1)

(1) See Appendix XIX.

The Meos practice ancestor worship primarily, like many Asian peoples. They have no pagodas or bonzes, but elders perform the office of priests and also administer justice.

[268] The Meos bury their dead, and make animal sacrifices on the occasion of births, marriages and deaths so as to gain the favor of the "Phis" or multiple and varied genii in whose existence and influence they believe.

Marriage is as simple as among the other peoples of Laos.

Divorce may occur either through mutual consent or in the case of adultery.

Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

• 291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear 302 their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let themselves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium 241 poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.

224 Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a [212] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.

[198] The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not 101 greet strangers with as much good will.

271 The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear-pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

291

Finally, the Ao-Tchaine Yaos owe their name (bearing sapeks) to the fact that the men's jacket, which is shorter than that of the other Yaos, is ornamented in front with several rows of flat copper or silver buttons which resemble sapeks (Annamite and Chinese coins).

302

The women fasten a pad of compact, gummed hair on their coil by means of sticks made of ivory, of bone or simply of wood.

364

Like the Meos, the Yaos inhabit the peaks of mountains in northern Laos where they grow poppies. They are confirmed opium smokers. [276]

[270] [Blank page] [271] [Illustration at top]

CHAPTER V

1. ORGANIZATION

439

Consulate and Commercial Agencies. Before the treaty of October 3, 1893, we already had a consul at Luang-Prabang in the Mekong basin, on the right bank of the river. In 1892 the vice-consulate was closed and commercial agencies were set up at Luang-Prabang, Outhene and Bassac on the right bank, and then at Stung-Treng on the left bank. The first three agencies were directed by representatives of the French Syndicate of Laos, and the last by a clerk of Posts and Telegraphs. The commercial agents performed the functions of consular agents. Later on in 1894 and 1895 when we actually took possession of Laos, that is to say of the territory on the left bank of the Mekong, two additional agencies were established at Xieng-Khong and Xieng-Sen. [272] Then in 1895 the agencies of Pak-Lay, Xieng-Khan, Nong-Khay, Lakhone, Ban-Mouk-Dahan and Kemmarat were created on the right bank, bringing the total number to ten, for those of Stung-Treng and Luang-Prabang had been raised to the status of commissionerships.

175

648

These new agencies were directed by "commercial agents" specially appointed for the purpose. In addition to the delegates of the French Syndicate of Laos who continued to hold office, these agents included a few inspectors of the Tonkin native guard.

The duties of these officials were poorly defined, and their chief role was to assert our presence. They were mere information agents. For this reason official circles soon decided to abolish these posts, an action made possible chiefly by the establishment of two new vice-consulates in Siam, one at Oubone and one at Ban-Dua-Makeng.

149: Reinach--247 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"What makes everything easy and is used for everything is this hollow wood, at once so solid and so light, the incomparable bamboo. In France we see it only in the form of pleasant but useless little articles of furniture. Here bamboo is sufficient to every task. It provides the whole house, frame as well as walls. The inner walls and floors are made of matted bamboo lathwork. Yet such a house, with its furniture, bed, tables, various accessories and its luxury objects, if you are a person of refinement, can be improvised for you in a space of two hours wherever you want.

"Has a bridge been washed out? In two hours, thanks to this wood which is easy to manage and to work, men will have made a new bridge. One is especially struck, at the beginning of this life which is so free and, more than any other, independent of men and things, by the great simplicity and ingenuity of all the procedures. Objects are rudimentary but practical, easy to make, soon ready and simple to repair. Everyone knows how to build ordinary furnishings, and no interruptions are caused here as they are when even the slightest damage occurs to one of our highly developed utensils, which only a specialist knows how to repair.

"A bamboo tube is a safe place for your maps and papers. It is a drinking glass, and it is also a pipe for smokers. On a larger scale, it is a bucket for carrying water, and the receptacle for all liquid and solid provisions. When provided with a handle it serves as a pot for the Laotians to cook their rice in, or to prepare syrup from the sugar palm. When torn into thongs it is used as rope and string. Ligatures of sapeks are threaded on kelates, or bamboo filaments, and this is what makes our new Indo-Chinese sou, with its round hole in the middle, so impractical. Those who preside over the striking of our coins are unaware that the kelate is square, a fact which the first comer from the interior could have told them. Baskets of all kinds are made with these same kelates for holding and transporting material. Hats are also made of them to provide shelter from the sun and rain. At night, when the stage of your journey is too long and you have to continue after nightfall even at the risk of meeting a tiger, setting fire to a bamboo branch is enough to frighten any off and to light your way. And not only is bamboo used to make torches, hats, string, dishes, furniture, houses and bridges, but it also serves as animal fodder and even as food for the natives, who eat the tenderest shoots as we would eat asparagus.

149: Reinach--376a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

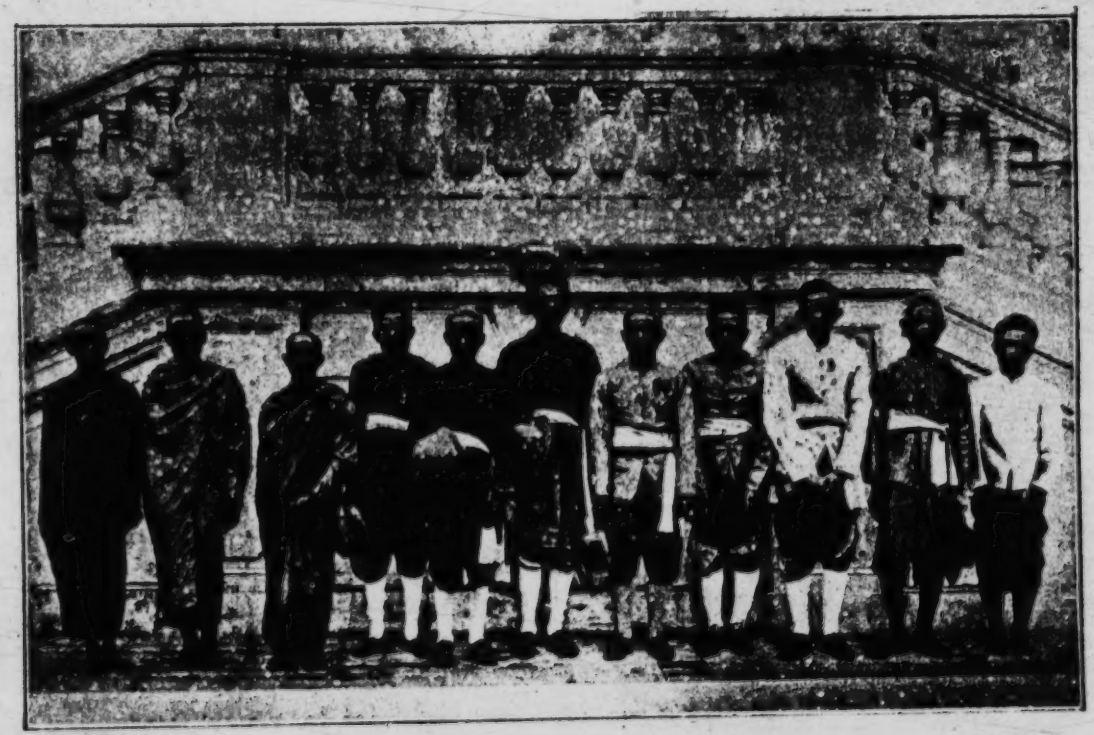

Fig. 118 /p. 495/ A group of Laotian mandarins and bonzes.
(After a photograph made in Saigon in 1898.)

China and Indo-China (1).

[113] (1) E. Picanon, Le Laos français. 1901, Challamel. [Paris.]

II

173 Laos, Thais and Khas. Although the Laotian legends
563 attribute the same origin to all of these (Mueng-Theng or Dien-Bien-
144 Phu) and say that they all came from the same "gourd" (Nam-Tao-Phoun), it is hardly likely that the Laotians and the Khas have a common origin. Indeed, the characteristics which serve to distinguish the two races are too numerous and too marked, both from the point of view of the racial types themselves and as regards language, mores and religious beliefs.

144 Nor can it be affirmed that the Khas are the representatives of
174 the aboriginal population, for before any of their people had mounted the throne of Luang-Prabang, six kings foreign to their race had already occupied it--if we may regard the list of the first kings of the land which is preserved in the Phong-Sa Va-Dan (annals of the kingdom) as correct--and of these conquering princes the first is said to have come from India, and the second from Cambodia.

In any case, the Khas are said to have preceded the Laotians in the land, and it was not until the reign of their fourth and last king that they are supposed to have been conquered and driven out or enslaved by the Laotians, who had come down from Dien-Bien-
[609] Phu. Since that time, and despite many revolts of which the last is almost recent, the Khas have never ceased being "a folk talliable and liable to forced labor at pleasure" for their vanquishers, and their name has become a synonym for a low person or slave in the current
[561] idiom. Not until 1895 were the Khas once and for all freed--freed is perhaps not the word, for in the strict sense they were never slaves--or at least summoned to enjoy a system of rule similar to that of the other natives and which left no margin for arbitrariness and vexations.

173 In designating Dien-Bien-Phu as the cradle of the Laotian people, or at least in attributing to the Laotians and the Thais a common origin, legend seems to be in agreement with reality. There are indeed many points of resemblance and contact between the two peoples. The type is invariably the same, although finer in the native of Luang-
175 Prabang than in the native of Lai-Chau or Dien-Bien-Phu. Not more
•291 than two hundred years ago the Laotians still wore, like the black
177 Thais, the Annamite costume and their hair wound in a coil. It was doubtless after contact with the Siamese--who had themselves

175
[104] taken after the Cambodians in this respect--that they later
291 adopted the "sampot" and formed the habit of cutting their hair very
177 short, just as the Thais of Lai-Chau today dress like their Chinese neighbors and wear their hair in a long pigtail. The same reasons may also explain modifications in language and writing, which must have been identical in the beginning.

563 Of the Phou-Thais who are settled today in the territory of
144 Luang-Prabang, some--and these make up the greater number--are black Thais (aborigines) from Dien-Bien-Phu, with a darker coloration than the inhabitants of Lai-Chau, who are called white Thais for this reason. The others belong to this second variety.

The ones who sacked Luang-Prabang in 1887 under the leadership of Deo-Van-Tri were white Thais.

Youns. The Laotians living on the right bank of the Mekong at Xieng-Mai, Xieng-Sen, Muong-Nan, etc. are called Youns.
[304] The only feature which distinguishes them from their fellows on the left bank is that they generally tattoo their stomachs, whereas the others tattoo the thighs and upper part of the legs, whence the names "Lao-Phoung-Khao" (white-bellied Laotians) and Lao-Phoung-Dam (black-bellied Laotians) which are used in designating the ones and the others.

Phais. Neither do the Phais constitute a separate racial group. They are Khas who are in the process of being transformed, Khas crossed with either Lus or Laotians according as their neighbors have been representatives of the first or the second of these races. Although after this contact they have begun to police themselves and to bring their way of life into conformity with that of the Lus or Laotians, they are nonetheless subject to the same regime as the Khas in respect to taxes and other matters.

563 Lus. The Lus, who are natives of the Sip-Song Pan-Nas, did
125 not come and settle in any great numbers in the territory of Luang-Prabang until long after the Laotians, and then only in order to flee the war which was desolating their own land, or simply because they hoped to find better living conditions in this territory. The immigration took place in an entirely peaceful manner, and since that time the Lus have not ceased to live on good terms with the Laotians, whose mores and dress they have generally adopted and by whom they will soon be completely assimilated.

563 Khos, Meos, Yaos. These various names designate natives whose racial type, dress and hairdo ending in a queue unquestionably denote a Chinese origin, and who do not differ from one another except

536 There is no scenery. The costumes and headdresses vary according to the characters represented. The masks of colored lacquer worn by the actors, their accessories (weapons, scarves, etc.) being traditional and invariable enable the fictitious characters on the stage to be identified.

/178 The theatre of animated shadows, similar to the shadow theatre
101/ of China and Java, tends to disappear little by little.

Laotian Decoration.

Laotian decoration is characterized by a somewhat mannered
531 elegance which can be noticed in the motifs of the pagoda doors and
178 windows. The Laotian artisan is, however, endowed with an extremely well developed artistic sense, but the present day demands do not enable him any longer to live by his handiwork, and the importation of manufactured articles tends to make the artist disappear. /89/ He can only survive by royal patronage. The royal palace for this reason shelters sculptors on wood and ivory as well as goldsmiths, but
/644/ their produce is not sold and the tourist will hardly be able to bring back with him typical Laotian objects.

However, the weaving of silk materials of divers shades, often laminated with gold or silver, is still done on a sufficient scale to
/236/ satisfy the passing tourist.

The Sin

This is a skirt reaching from the hips to the ankles. It is of a
291 rather somber color with a design of vertical stripes very close together and not very evident. This skirt is decorated on its lower edge with a flat trimming of two or three rows of gold or silver braid. At the top of the skirt a belt of red cloth, more or less embroidered, relieves the rather dark tone. This garment is a regular cylinder having the same width on its entire length. When the woman emerges from her bath she lifts her skirt, gathered into the shape of a crown, above her head and lets it slide down the length of her body. She fixes it without hooks or fasteners to her belt by means of a turned in pleat tied in front leaving most of her belly exposed. A bright colored scarf of cotton or silk thrown over one shoulder and completely covering the breasts completes the costume. The most beautiful scarves come from Samneua, Luang Prabang and Khong. The jewelry most frequently seen consists of
301 silver bracelets, necklaces and buttons, rings, long crossed over chains /chaînes-sautoirs/, flat clasps, and belts usually of silver but sometimes of gold.

/Pages 90 to 135 not translated/ /136 blank/